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Viewing cable 08MANAGUA417, ELECTION THEFT FOR DUMMIES: CPCS, CSE, FSLN

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Understanding cables

Every cable message consists of three parts:

- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
- The bottom box presents the body of the cable. The opening can contain a more specific subject, references to other cables ([browse by origin](#) to find them) or additional comment. This is followed by the main contents of the cable: a summary, a collection of specific topics and a comment section.

To understand the justification used for the classification of each cable, please use this [WikiSource](#) article as reference.

Discussing cables

If you find meaningful or important information in a cable, please link directly to its unique reference number. Linking to a specific paragraph in the body of a cable is also possible by copying the appropriate link (to be found at the paragraph symbol). Please mark messages for social networking services like Twitter with the hash tags **#cablegate** and a hash containing the reference ID e.g. **#08MANAGUA417**.

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
08MANAGUA417	2008-04-08 20:26	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758468.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758464.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4102/estrada-y-la-ldquo-doble-cara-rdquo-ante-ee-uu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3966/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-ee-uu-en-el-2006>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2758764.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-23/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2758753.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4041/millones-de-dolares-sin-control-y-a-discrecion>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4040/la-ldquo-injerencia-rdquo-de-venezuela-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/4047/rodrigo-barreto-enviado-de-ldquo-vacaciones-rdquo>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2757239.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/NotaPrincipal/Mundo2746658.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2757244.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-16/Mundo/Relacionados/Mundo2746673.aspx>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3991/dra-yadira-centeno-desmiente-cable-diplomatico-eeuu>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3968/pellas-pronostico-a-eeuu-victoria-de-ortega-en-2006>
<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 MANAGUA 000417

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR USAID/LAC BONICELLI AND BATLLE
NSC FOR ALVARADO AND FISK
DEPT FOR WHA/CEN - NYMAN AND GREENE
DEPT FOR INR/IAA - EMERSON
DEPT PLS PASS USOAS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/04/2018

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SUBJECT: ELECTION THEFT FOR DUMMIES: CPCS, CSE, FSLN
RIGGING VOTER ROLLS

REF: A. MANAGUA 209

[1](#)B. MANAGUA 153

[1](#)C. 2006 MANAGUA 2423

[1](#)D. 2006 MANAGUA 2080

[1](#)E. 2006 MANAGUA 148

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli for reasons 1.4 b & d.

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. The Citizens' Power Councils (CPCs), the Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) and FSLN-controlled municipalities in several of Nicaragua's Departments appear to be engaged in a concerted and coordinated effort to pad voter rolls with FSLN-supporting voters for the upcoming municipal elections. According to our contacts, CPC teams are canvassing villages block-by-block identifying FSLN-leaning voters and pre-clearing them for cedula (ID card) registration with the CSE, while skipping over non-FSLN households. In some cases CPCs have been granted the use of official municipal assets (camera, vehicles, etc.) to seek out and register potential FSLN voters. The plan is as follows: Upon instruction from CPCs, these would-be new voters are "screened" for candidate preference by CSE personnel, with FSLN supporters given expedited service. Finally, the CSE releases new cedula to the CPC teams, which then deliver cedula directly to the homes of the newly-minted voters. While we saw elements of widespread CSE collusion in voter disenfranchisement during the 2006 National elections (REFS C & D), there is a disturbing new twist involving the CPCs that results in a state-subsidized discrimination against non-FSLN voters. Opposition political parties have been able to partially mitigate this disadvantage by encouraging their supporters to indicate a stated preference for the FSLN candidate when registering for cedula. END SUMMARY.

CPCs Engaged in Padding Voter Rolls

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[1](#)2. (C) We have heard with increasing frequency from multiple independent sources that the FSLN is utilizing the CPCs to collude with the CSE in order to pad voter rolls with FSLN supporters for the upcoming municipal elections. Several of our contacts both from political parties and from pro-democracy NGOs have provided independent confirmation of

widespread collusion between the CPCs, the CSE and FSLN-controlled municipalities to facilitate expedited cedula (ID card) registration for FSLN supporters, including some "voters" under the legally established voting age of 16 years. We have also been told that CSE personnel are routinely asking cedula applicants which election candidate they prefer. Those naming the FSLN candidate are offered expedited service, while those applicants naming a different candidate are given the "raton loco (crazy rat)" treatment, i.e. the runaround, and told application documents are incomplete or inadequate.

How the Plan Works: Collusion and Corruption

13. (C) Based on multiple conversations with opposition party and NGO contacts over the last two months, the plan is carried out in the following manner. At the local level CPCs have organized voter roll teams comprised of CPC rank-and-file, FSLN party rank-and-file, and frequently, FSLN-supporting departmental employees of National Ministries, e.g. Education, Health, Agriculture, etc. These teams have been given voter registration lists and charged with identifying and registering new voters who are likely to support FSLN candidates in the upcoming municipal elections. In FSLN-controlled municipalities, these CPC voter registration teams are also granted access to municipal assets, primarily means of transportation, e.g. trucks, motorcycles, bicycles, which they use to reach remote, outlying areas where potential voters would otherwise find it difficult, if not, impossible to undertake the time and expense of registering to vote.

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14. (C) Each day these CPC voter registration teams are sent out with cameras and materials to identify and register potential FSLN-friendly voters. Teams then determine whether a particular household is "FSLN" or not. Any "non-FSLN" household is skipped. NOTE: In Nueva Segovia, Matagalpa and other Departments, we have heard multiple stories of CPC teams moving house by house through a neighborhood and intentionally skipping households known to be non-FSLN friendly. END NOTE. For the FSLN-supporting households, potential voters are provided their cedula registration packet (a photograph and official copies of vital documents -- birth certificate, etc.) free of charge by the CPC team and instructed to visit the CSE office and identify themselves as supporters of FSLN municipal candidates. We have been told that upon doing so, the CSE expedites the cedula registration process by accepting the documentation packet unchallenged. Furthermore, the CSE is turning over completed cedula to the CPC teams that deliver the new cedula directly to the voters, saving these individuals the time and expense of a return trip to the CSE offices. On its face this process appears to be simply a well-organized voter registration effort by the ruling FSLN. However, its practical effect is to discriminate against and disenfranchise large numbers of non-FSLN-leaning voters. Though we saw this type of systematic disenfranchisement during the 2006 National elections (REFS C & D), there are three areas of concern that make the involvement of CPCs a new and disturbing development.

Why This Process is Problematic: State-Funded Discrimination and Disenfranchisement

15. (C) State-Funded Disenfranchisement. These CPC teams are been granted access to municipal-owned assets; placing all other party and NGO voter registration efforts at a financial disadvantage. By allowing CPC teams the use of official vehicles, the FSLN-controlled municipalities are, in effect, using state funds to subsidize the cost of FSLN voter registration efforts. The use of state-funded resources to register voters is a benefit is not equally available to

other opposition parties and NGOs seeking to implement voter registration programs and, with local fuel prices currently above USD 4.30 per gallon for gasoline and for widely-used diesel, is a substantial financial advantage particularly given that there is no evidence that municipalities are being reimbursed for fuel costs by the CPCs.

¶6. (C) A second aspect of this state-funded disenfranchisement is that of the CPCs providing the cedula registration packets without cost to applicants. Normally, Nicaraguans incur substantial costs when registering for a cedula. These costs include a photo of the proper size and type, official copies of vital documents, including birth certificate, etc. Applications must also be done in person at a CSE office, which incurs travel and lodging costs as CSE offices are neither widely-dispersed throughout the country nor continually manned throughout the year. The CPC teams have been provided with cameras and use of FSLN-controlled municipal assets to provide paper documentation. Again this amounts to a state subsidy for FSLN voters that is not available to non-FSLN voters.

¶7. (C) Discrimination Based on Party Affiliation. The second aspect of this process is its discrimination against non-FSLN voters and the apparent collusion between CPC voter registration teams and CSE staff. CPC-referred applicants are provided an expedited registration process, including having their application packet accepted by the CSE without challenge. Furthermore, newly-printed cedula documents are given back to CPC teams that deliver the cedula directly to the applicant. We have been told by multiple contacts from political parties and pro-democracy NGOs that upon appearing at the CSE office, applicants are routinely asked which candidate they favor. If the answer is not the FSLN candidate, applicants have their application packet challenged. The CSE staff routinely finds some problem or

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deficiency with the packet, e.g. the packet is incomplete, a photo is the wrong type, a copy of a vital document is inadequate or unacceptable, at which point the applicant is directed to remediate the deficiency. This normally requires a new photo or a return visit to the applicant's local registry office for a new "proper" copy of a vital document, and then a return trip back to the CSE office, with all the associated additional costs. This runaround normally lengthens the registration process by day or weeks and occasionally by months, if the applicant is from a particularly remote area. Furthermore, even if an applicant can successfully submit his or her packet, they are required to return to the CSE office in person to collect the cedula. However, we have been told repeatedly that local CSE offices are frequently unable to locate the finished cedula of non-FSLN voters, often for months at a time. The end result is large numbers of non-FSLN potential voters that are unable to register or vote due to lack of a cedula.

COMMENT
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¶8. (C) With increasing frequency, we have heard detailed descriptions from several different locales of this apparent collusion between the CSE, CPCs, and the FSLN. The apparent corruption and ineptitude of the CSE is not new to us (REFS C & D) -- being an all-too-common story in advance of the 2006 presidential elections. However the disturbing new elements here are the direct involvement of the CPCs in registering FSLN voters and the use of state-controlled funds to facilitate this process as well as the apparent level of coordination between the CPCs, FSLN-controlled municipalities, and the CSE to actively discriminate against and disenfranchise non-FSLN voters. We also note that the ability of the CSE to engage in systematic disenfranchisement of this scale has been greatly increased, given that earlier this year, senior CSE leadership purged nearly all non-FSLN aligned staff (REF B).

